PAGES 9 to 16.

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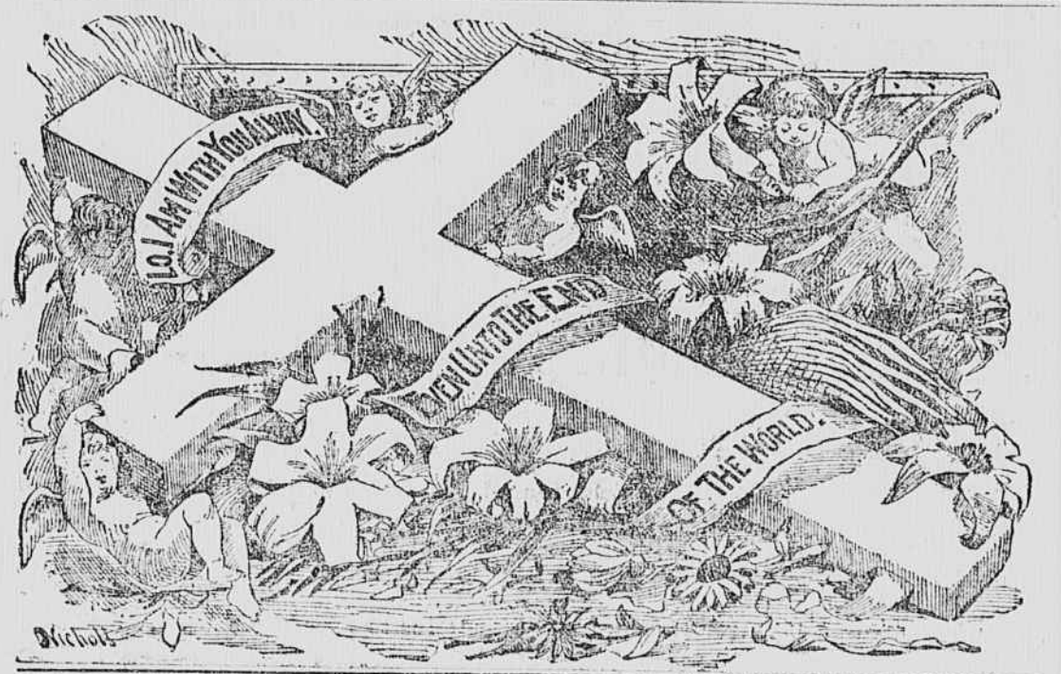


How He Arose.

AN EASTER STORY.

BY WILL L. VISSCHER.

JOHN MICOU stood with his back to the fireplace in the living-room, first on one foot then on the other, toasting the soles of his heavy boots. He had just come in from his work of repairing the broken places in the worm fences on the little blue grass farm which he had inherited, and on which stood the log house in which he had made his first appearance on earth fifty-odd years before.

Near by, that is to say, within a mile or so from Chinquapin hill, stood the ancient village of Perley, whose spires and other highest objects could be seen, in almost any kind of weather, from the altitude of the farmhouse.

Jacques and Louise Micou, the founders of the American Micou family, had long ago come to the last rest and their children were out in the world, prosperous people, heads of families who still spoke of Chinquapin hill as "home," and who with their children frequently came to the old place for summerings, a few at a time, or many of them, as circumstances were, and it was always a haven when a haven was needed.

Of the sons and daughters of Jacques and Louise there were two, however, who had never left Chinquapin hill except on social or business visits. They were John and Julie. John you have already met. He was the youngest son of the family and the master of Chinquapin hill, and he had a glorious family of boys and girls, about a dozen in all, and Mrs. John was yet a handsome, white-haired, quiet and happy matron of fifty.

Julie was the "old maid" of the family. She was trim and neat, demure and forty-odd, sweet-faced and sweet-mannered, beloved by the entire tribe and the especial love and butt of her almost brawny yet tender brother John. He rallied her about her old maid ways, but frequently hugged her like a bear, when she came in his way, and always released her with a gentle kiss.

Late in the afternoon of a soft day—soft as to the condition of the soil—early in the year of grace, 1893, while John Micou was toasting the soles of his boots before the fire, as he stood first on one foot and then on the other, he was joking Julie as usual, and upon his favorite theme.

"Joe Thompson will be in at Easter, won't he, Julie? Joe's hair must be a sight by this time if he hasn't had it cut any more than he did in those days. Maybe he's bald. That would be a natural judgment against him. You must have hit him pretty hard to make him stay away so long, and him so devoted, too."

Julie gave a sly little glance at her big old brother and something in her eyes that had the hint of a hunted expression over them. John, seeing it, caught her in his arms, held her up as if she were a child and kissed her, then sat down with her on his lap and said:

"I think I would go and hunt him up and slap him over if he were worth the trouble. But he isn't, and never was, and I wish you would quit thinking about him, honey, for I know you always are. I'm worth a ten-acre field of such as him and you've got me."

For answer to this Julie turned her face to her big brother's shoulder and he said nothing more till she lifted her tear-tinted cheeks and looked away, trying to hide the weakness.

"Never mind, honey," John continued, "I'm going to give you carte blanche to decorate the church for Easter, and—how's your bonnet? Well, you shall have the best one in the shop and the prettiest. Now run away, I know you want to."

She arose and giving John the tiniest kiss on the ear—or somewhere in that neighborhood—vanished in her gentle way.

"I wish that milksop had been born in Beloochistan and never left home," John Micou remarked to himself, as he contemplated the bald head of one of the brass andirons.

The Micous had descended from Huguenot stock that had originally settled in North Carolina, and Episcopalianism had been their inherited religion. Julie's religion was second nature to her. Indeed it was almost "first-nature," if I may be allowed the term. Joseph Thompson and Julie Micou had been sweethearts from their childhood and this association of the two had grown to be a settled and accepted fact in the two families who were as close as adjoining farms and two generations of intimacy could make them, and yet the Thompsons were Methodists.

There came an Easter season just about the time when Joe and Julie were at the portals of manhood and womanhood in which Julie, with other maidens of the church, for two or three days before Easter Sunday, was busily and devoutly dressing, adorning and decorating the walls, chancel and pulpit of the old chapel in the village for the approaching festival.

There were some young men in the little church with the girls helping them about the heavier part of their pleasant and congenial tasks, and in the chatter among the young folks there arose some good-natured bantering concerning denominational faiths. One of the other girls remarked that there was really only one Christian church, "the Holy Catholic," meaning, of course, its Protestant side, and that such denominations as Methodists, Reformers, Baptists and the like were only "societies."

The "insane impulse" is something to which nearly all intelligent persons are more or less exposed, at some time in some way. The inclination to spring from a high place to the depths below; to throw one's self under a rapidly passing railway train; to say a harsh thing at the wrong time, are, perhaps, some of the more violent phases of this "impulse," and it was that kind of an insane impulse that led Joe Thompson on that Saturday afternoon to say:

"More religion and less ceremony is good to have in a church. But that can't be expected in the Episcopal church, of which the best thing ever said is that it doesn't bother with religion or politics."

Following this Thompson may have been urged to this under the delusion that he was saying something very humorous, second-hand though he knew it to be.

He had barely uttered the words when he caught a look from Julie that made him feel just as if he had struck her a violent blow in the face with his clenched fist. It was the same look of the hunted fawn that has been mentioned before in this true tale. He was heartily ashamed of it, but did not go to Julie with humble apologies and contritely beg her pardon as he should have done.

When the work in the church was completed Julie accompanied a school-time friend and chum to her home in the village and remained until time for services the following day, Easter Sunday. Then she went home with the others, in the family carriage, to Chinquapin Hill.

Sometimes when things start the wrong way it seems that the track is lubricated to facilitate swiftness.

It had been arranged that Joe Thompson was to go to a distant city, in due time, to take a place in business with a maternal uncle who was the head of a great manufacturing establishment. A contingency had arisen in the establishment that made it necessary for him to start on the Monday morning, succeeding Easter Sunday, in obedience to a sudden message.

On his way, in the early morning, to the village where he was to take passage, Joe called at Chinquapin Hill to say "good-by," and also, let us hope, to apologize to Julie for his almost brutal words of the Saturday before.

Julie was ill and not knowing that he was going so far away so suddenly did not see him.

Love is exceedingly sensitive and is eminently powerful in constructing mountains from mole hills.

Joseph Thompson, as he pursued his way, ruminating upon the subject, concluded, of course, that Julie was angry with him, when, indeed, she had never been angry in her life, though, truth to tell, she was still suffering from the blow he had given. He made some poor excuses for himself to himself, but the foundation that upheld him in it all was that he would smooth matters over, if necessary, in his letters, and he would see her in the summer. Besides, Mr. Joseph Thompson felt very much elated, somewhat conceited and altogether self-satisfied, as rural young men nearly always do under anything like similar circumstances. He felt proud, indeed, to think that the city could not, very well, get along without him.

It transpired that the inexperienced Joseph fitted the city too well, but his uncle's business not closely enough.

The story is so old that to repeat it would seem to be a waste of time, not to speak of its commonplaceness. Joe's letters were just like all such letters for a time, and then they fell off just as letters do when young men from the country start in the city on the pace that kills. Joe's dismissal from his uncle's service brought him a consciousness of disgrace. He went elsewhere—indeed far off into the west—to accept a situation obtained under the influence of a boon companion. Ugly habits brought more bad results and thus the years went on. Home and Julie had become a befogged memory. But Julie herself kept on in her devotion to the little chapel, and with Joe beside it in her heart, while the hunted look in her eyes became more and more frequent, and she grew to be the little old maid that she was, always expecting that Joe would come some day, and then dear, old, big brother John would quit joking her about the lost sweetheart of "way back yonder."

Strangely things sometimes happen to change the whole course of a life. For instance: A plain, common, every-day printer, who had just returned to his side of the country after the great war of 1861-65, seeking employment in the "black art" that he had abandoned four years before, to become a soldier, was in a steamboat explosion and came down on his head from his blowing up, striking in such a way that his bumps of humor and pathos, that lie so close together, were so developed when he picked himself out of a swath of dead people lying on the river bank, that he got ten thousand dollars' damages, became a newspaper proprietor and grew rich and famous from his writings and it all.

Joseph Thompson was one day borne from the scene of a western saloon brawl, wounded and unconscious, to a hospital. It happened to be an Episcopal institution to which he was carried, and it was more like a home than a hospital.

He had a long and hard tussle and wrestle for life, but he came out of it at last, subdued, refined as by fire, changed altogether for the better. His native intelligence assumed a stronger sway than it had ever gained before and his heart turned to better things; to home, and Julie, and religion. During his long convalescence he had the almost continual companionship of the young rector who had charge of the hospital chapel. Joe fitted himself, easily, for confirmation in the church. He had learned its catechism, creed, litany and general services when a boy for Julie's sake; he studied for orders, was ordained as a minister and was given charge of a western parish.

The time came when he longed to preach in the chapel at Perley, and it was on the Easter Sunday morning of 1893 that he did so. He arrived unannounced at Perley the evening before.

John Micou had kept his promise with Julie, as he always did with all persons. She had carefully used his carte blanche to prepare for the Easter service the chapel that had grown to be a church, and she wore to church that morning the pretty and modest bonnet that John had set his heart upon her having, though it was not probably, "the best one in the shop," as he had suggested, because Julie didn't care for that.

It was known by the vestry that there would be a minister in the nature of a temporary "supply" for the old rector, who was growing feeble. It had been the request of Rev. Joseph Thompson that his name should not be announced until after the morning services. The vestry appreciated his wishes. This was his native town.

To Julie there was no need that the name should be given, even though the minister's hair was as white as his surplice, and twenty-five years had passed since she had seen that face. She knew that her big brother John would never again rally her about her long-lost sweetheart. He had arisen.

Bouquets for Easter.

The Easter bouquet of the Irish at the present day bears a strong resemblance to the two yellow irises depicted by Leonardo da Vinci in his interesting paintings of the Infant Christ. It consists of a spherical ball of primroses, carefully tied together, and in the center is placed a white six-petaled anemone, or pasque.

In Warwickshire, England, they have very similar bouquets, except that the plume of the anemone is supplied by a branch of the palm willow.

In the celebrated painting referred to, the Infant Christ is represented as standing between two yellow irises; that on the sinister side with the petals downward, apparently to represent the humanity or humiliation of Christ, while that on the dexter side had the petals upward, implying the divinity, or glorification.

The Heart of Easter.

Our joy and our hope is in the continuance of existence in another world, immediately after death, even as Christ's existence continued after His death; and we look more for this immediate resurrection than for some later one. Indeed, what the early Christians called resurrection of the dead we are apt to call, perhaps as correctly, the immortality of the soul; and we triumph in the thought that as the penitent thief had the promise that he should this day, while his body was yet unburied, be with Christ in Paradise, so the souls of all believers do at their death pass into glory. Because He lives we shall live also.

Those Easter Girls.

"What an artificial smile that Miss Scrumptious has. Did you notice how she smirked all through service?"

"Yes, dear, but you mustn't blame her. It's the most natural thing she possesses."—Brooklyn Life.

Why He Fasted.

Smith—Have you been fasting during Lent?

Flyboy—Don't see how I can help it, old boy; my landlady holds my trunk for board and I've got to stick by her.—Texas Siftings.

God's Messenger.

THE south wind caught the sunbeams
'Mong orange blooms at play,
And far o'er mountains bore them
To where the snowdrifts lay.
In soft, warm arms it bore them
To far off Northern land
Where brooks were bound in fetters
Wrought by the ice king's hand,
Till by an ancient maple
The south wind set them free
And the sunbeams smiled
Where the snow was piled
And danced in the leafless tree

The snowdrift moved and melted,
The brook its shackles cast
And through the ancient maple
The sap ran free and fast.
The cold earth stirred and murmured,
A violet brave looked up,
And the sunbeams came from the branches
And hid in its purple cup

The church bells rang the message
That cheered the hearts of men
When first the grave was conquered
And Jesus lived again;
The air was rich with odors
Of lily and of rose,
And organs made sweet thunder
While men forgave their foes.

But no heart sang so truly
The joyous Easter song,
As one who, quite deserted,
Slow strolled the wood along,
To have his darkened lifeway,
By every care beset,
All sad and lonely illumined
By that lone violet.

CHARLES EUGENE BANKS.

A Mystery Explained.

Although her Easter bonnet cost
A fortune in its way,
Her husband seemed not to be crossed,
Nor had a word to say.
I know you'll think this is a lie,
It's hard to overcome,
Until you know the reason why:
Her husband—he was dumb.

—N. Y. World.

Regular as Clockwork.

Dinah (scrubbing the floor)—You mus gib me a present to-morrow, missus. It's my birthday.

Mistress—And so your birthday comes on Easter this year, Dinah.

Dinah—Yessim, I has a birthday ebery Easter.—Life.

Disputed.

Clara—Mr. Fiddleback has just been trying to persuade me that I am a perfect Easter belle.

Maude—Don't you believe it?

Clara—No. I told him I had no ring.—Truth.

An Easter Episode.

Duckling—Did your ma do that?

Chick—No, I guess not. She does do a little scratching now and then, but she never did anything in black-and-white.—Judge.

A Helpless Victim.

In a new spring suit of clothing I had hoped I might appear,
For I needed and had set my heart upon it
But I'll have to wear the same duds I've been wearing all the year,
For my dear wife's going to buy an Easter bonnet.

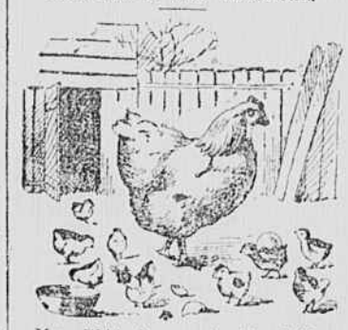
—Truth

An Improvement.

Rev. Mr. Drowsie—Did you enjoy my Easter sermon?

Mrs. Rapnack—Very much. I thought you read it so much better than you did last year.—Truth.

Had Not a Day to Spare.



Mrs. Biddy Barnyard—Ah, children, what a narrow escape you have had! To-morrow is Easter, and if you had been much later you might have been boiled for Easter eggs!—Golden Days.